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its novelty. The district in which the above substance is found, is called the *Sandy Braes*, from its being easily broken into coarse gravel.

Our walk here, though we felt tired, was exceedingly pleasant, particularly as we descended Drumadragh-hill, from which we had a fine view of the valley beneath, chequered with several linen bleach-fields, and the neat dwellings of their proprietors, which were set off by some thriving plantings. In short, the evening was full as agreeable as the day had been ;

....." Every storm  
Was hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,  
Soft-breathing, lightly with its wings along."

On many trees and thorns near the road, the Red-breast poured forth his soft melodious notes, giving an additional charm to the whole, and seemingly chanting his vesper to that Being, who ever accepts the homage of a grateful heart.

S.M.S.

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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#### ON THE CHARACTER OF SPENCER PERCEVAL.

**I** DETEST every species of flattery. It is the bane of sincerity, and frequently sacrifices truth at the shrine of hypocrisy. It manifests, on the part of the giver, a mind capable of acting with abject meanness, and under whatever circumstances the case may require. It may indeed be justly styled the food of fools, and surely it can be no mark of true wisdom in any, so to overlook their own defects, as to feel gratified at hearing themselves extolled (and this is mostly done for favours *expected*.) for virtues they do not possess. Even should they possess virtue, it can be no gratifi-

cation to a virtuous mind, to listen to the voice of flattery.

Nothing can be more sickening to a mind possessed of real greatness. Those who are most deficient in points of real merit, are generally the persons most ready to swallow with avidity the bait which flattery offers.

Indeed too few appear to be willing wholly to resist its seductive influence. I pity the great, and those in power, surrounded as they are with a crowd of flatterers and false admirers, who, from corrupt views, fill with idle tales the ears of their masters, and prevent the truth from finding access. They endeavour to shut out from the ear of authority, every kind of language conveying wise instructions, or sound maxims of policy.

It is but too just an observation, that the ears of princes are more open to listen to those who with vain adulation attempt to give a false colouring to the representation of things, than to barken to the language of simple truth, faithfully pointing out errors.

Truth is a gem too seldom known, to adorn the garb of a minister, and princes too generally suffer their minds to be so enfeebled, that they have not strength sufficient to see for themselves the nature of those political diseases with which states are so frequently convulsed, nor to apply the proper remedy. They depend too much on time-serving followers, and the effects that may be expected to result from such a course, cannot be of a nature very beneficial to the general interests of the community. Yet with all this evident mismanagement in princes and their ministers, the multitude lavish on their memories extravagant and certainly unearned praise. Such were a few of the reflections

that occurred, on reading some of the newspaper encomiums on the character of the late Spencer Perceval, and I was led to inquire, are these representations really true? They may help to amuse and to flatter the time-serving politicians of the day, and their dependants, but they will not hide from the eye of just discrimination those glaring defects, that so conspicuously marked his career, in the course of his administration, nor serve to satisfy the cravings of the oppressed part of the people, pressed down by repeated acts of taxation, to support a grievously protracted and cruel war, and to keep up a train of idle dependants, contained in the long catalogue of useless placemen and pensioners.

It may be said, that some of the preceding remarks on the danger of listening to the voice of flattery, cannot be applied to the fallen minister, as he is now alike regardless of praise or censure. He hears not the undistinguished cry of either. But they may with justice be applied to the crowd of court admirers, who, to keep their places, entered into his views, and tamely, on selfish principles, acquiesced in all his measures.

These may now be gratified at hearing him, as including themselves, extolled in extravagant terms of vain adulation, and false praise.

If any thing is said of the dead, justice requires that the truth should be told; and I admire that honest boldness with which the character of this minister is treated, towards the latter part of the *Retrospect of Politics*, in your last number. It must appear to the eye of impartial observation, a just delineation of his merits, how much soever the idle dependants of the present day, may endeavour to gild with false colouring, the name of a man who cer-

tainly did not deserve well of his country. Commemorative of which of his public acts, or of his virtues, are they going to erect monuments? It will only be one instance, among innumerable others, of the extravagant waste of the public purse, already sufficiently drained by a vain, profuse, and worse than useless expenditure. To what a low ebb is the good-sense of the British nation reduced? However, let us do justice where it is due, and pay a just tribute to that general feeling of pity and abhorrence which appeared to pervade most ranks at the horrid outrage that occasioned his death.

It is a crime of such a nature and magnitude, that no argument whatever can possibly be adduced to justify the heinous deed. But I see no reason why the manner of his death, criminal as it was, in the highest degree, should be brought forward as a plea in his favour, or as a cause why the truth should not be told. Let it come in what shape it may, "death never can consecrate error:" neither should a false delicacy to the memory of the deceased, so far prevail as to conceal from the public eye, that conduct, which when living, demanded public censure, and which, because of its probable extensive influence, may be considered as of the utmost national importance.

While we are ready to shudder at the recollection of the crime that lately engaged so much of the public attention, I wish it may have that weight on the minds of all, as to make a proper impression of the awfulness connected with the consideration of depriving, under any circumstance, a fellow-creature of existence. In my view, greater importance cannot be attached to the consideration of any subject, and I regret that it is so much treated of,

in a manner that manifests how lightly it is contemplated, in too general a way. We justly censure the circumstances attending the murder of Spencer Perceval, but how is it possible to acquit as innocent, the promoters of those repeated acts of administration, that hurry on to the field, so many of their fellow-mortals : where thousands of lives are wantonly sported with, and inhumanly sacrificed to the vain purposes of the most ambitious pursuits, and selfish interests of a misguided state-policy.

I long much to behold human nature possessing sound renovation, and properly supporting a real consistency of character and conduct, which never can be expected to take place, so long as the passions are unsubdued and suffered to remain predominant.

N.S.

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*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

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#### ON IMPROPER COMPANY.

AMONGST the incongruities of mankind, I have often had occasion to observe, that none of the lower order are so apt to go astray through inebriety, as those whom nature has been pleased to gift with some talent above the level of mankind.

The origin of this depravity, doubtless, may be traced to a number of causes, but to none more than improper company ; and I believe it will be generally acceded to, that none are more improper than those frequenters of public houses, often, but certainly improperly, termed *good company*. Here, perhaps, it is necessary to observe, that in the plebeian walks of life, if persons are any way distinguished for genius, their company becomes rather courted ; they rarely, if ever, are objects of envy to their equals, who usually

vie in kind attentions towards them, and if amongst company, mistaken friendship prevails so much, that they are rarely suffered to remove, till intoxicated.

It does not require what may be termed a constellation of talents to make a person's company be sought after ; the contrary is often evident, for singing a song in a tolerable manner, or a happy knack of telling a story, or even relating a common place anecdote, answers this purpose ; and those, or such like trifles, have often caused the contracting of habits, which were never relinquished but with existence.

It is generally acknowledged that there is no way so good to elucidate an observation as example ; and for the purpose of strengthening the above remarks, I shall subjoin some account of a young man with whom I was acquainted, the outlines of whose history will too fully prove the truth of what has been advanced.

This person, whom I shall call Alexis, was bred in an obscure village in the county of Antrim. His parents were rather in an humble station ; therefore, though their only son, his education was confined to a few months at school ; he, however, improved himself much, by attending night schools, and reading select authors, which he obtained by becoming member of a book-club.

Amongst the works which now passed through his hands, were Johnson's poems, of which he became a zealous admirer. In perusing books he now spent those hours that could be spared from labour, and which had been till lately so far mispent at dancings, &c. When in general company, which was now seldom, he appeared less lively than formerly ; but if the company was to his liking, he was fond, on the